Research Projects and special Frontline Demonstrations by the Directorate of Rice Research and the Agricultural Universities.

(b) Direct seeding method of sowing sprouted seeds in puddled soil both by broadcasting and line sowing utilizing row seeder has been standardized. Among the varieties evaluated, Vikas, Krishna Hamsa and IET 9994 were found suitable. Direct seedling utilizing these approaches was found to be on par with transplanted crop in yield. Inspite of consumption of slightly more irrigation water, it has several advantages. Direct seeded crop matures earlier by 8—10 days than transplanted one. This practice ensures timely planting and maintenance of optimum population which are important for realizing high yields. Direct seeded crop, by saving costs on labour and high yields ensure relatively higher profit ranging from Rs. 500 to 600 per hectare.

(c) as indicated under (a) above.

(d) Farmers are favourably responding.

Explorations for Germplasm Collection

239. DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) how many explorations were made for germplasm collection during the last three years by the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources under ICAR;

(b) the significance of such explorations and accession in crops;

(c) how will it benefit the common farmer;

(d) the cost benefit thereof; and

(e) the steps being taken to make its applied use?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) 75 explorations were conducted during last 3 years.

(b) Agro-biodiversity prevalent in the Indian farming system is being threatened with genetic erosion due to fast spread of a few improved varieties/hybrids replacing hundreds of native varieties in all major crop plants. The valuable genetic diversity is being collected through the explorations and conserved for use in crop improvement.

(c) All modern varieties being cultivated by farmers today have been bred by using the valuable characters found in the native germplasm. To serve the farming community continuously with better varieties collection and conservation of rich germplasm of this country is important.

(d) Genetic diversity is very valuable and its value cannot be ascertained. Its conservation at national level will be important. Farmers will benefit with the development of new varieties using this diversity.

(e) The National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources is involved in characterisation and evaluation of this agro-biodiversity so that it could be used for development of improved varieties by Indian scientists which would be eventually provided to the farmers for increasing the production and productivity.

Krishi Vigyan Kendras

240. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state;

(a) the number of Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the country, State-wise;

(b) how many of them are run by NGOs;

(c) whether there is any proposal pending from an NGO of Manipur recommended by Government of Manipur in the matter; and

(d) whether there is any proposal for agricultural information centres in the villages of the country to be operated by NGOs?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) There are 261 Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the country. State-wise list is attached. (*see* below).

(b) There are 79 Krishi Vigyan Kendras under N.G.Os.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) No, Sir.

Statement

State-wise list of Krishi Vigyan Kendras

Sl. No.	State	No. of K.V.Ks
1.	Andaman & Nicobar	01
2.	Andhra Pradesh	17
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	01
4.	Assam	05
5.	Bihar	18
6.	Delhi	01